

PEACE, SECURITY AND STABILITY IN SAMEGRELO

A COMMUNITY-INFORMED STRATEGY



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Peace, security and stability in Samegrelo – a community-informed strategy

Introduction

This report summarises the results of a process to identify and plan for challenges to peace, security and stability in Samegrelo, undertaken by a group of local society representatives in 2010. It first describes challenges identified by the group, then analyses the four challenges they consider to be most important and provides recommendations for how they should be addressed. The resulting ‘strategy’ is community-informed. This means that the group of society representatives consulted with a wide group of communities at each step of the process (i.e. identification of challenges, analysis of key challenges and strategising solutions) in order to get their thoughts and perspectives. As such, this is not an ‘expert analysis’, but one grounded in the understanding and reality of people living in Samegrelo. We hope that this report will help local, national and international decision-makers to better address challenges facing the region.

This report is one outcome of the project *Promoting broader and more informed dialogue on conflict, security and peace in Georgia*. Jointly implemented by the Caucasus Institute for Peace, Democracy and Development, the Georgian Young Lawyers’ Association and Saferworld, this project is designed to develop the capacity of Georgian civil society to analyse, and play a constructive role in policy development on, issues related to conflict, security and peace. The process involves a two-way conversation between representative groups and wider society in the regions of Kvemo Kartli, Samegrelo, Samtskhe-Javakheti and Shida Kartli. It also involves regular meetings between representatives of these regions, to share outcomes from their respective analyses. The process has the following objectives:

1. to elicit information from community members about their perspectives on conflict issues
2. to provide more balanced and impartial information about conflict issues

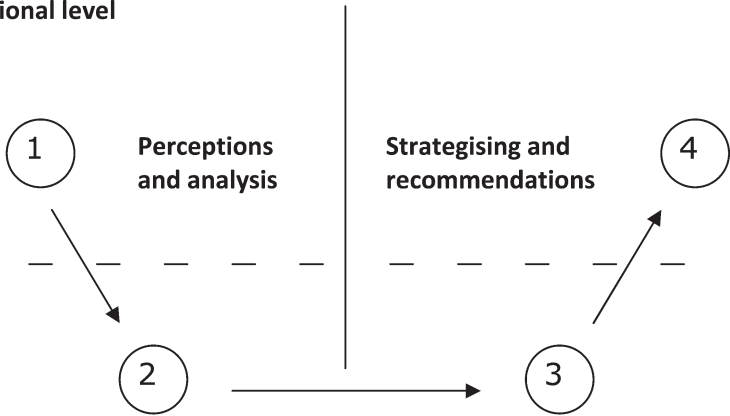
3. to stimulate people to think about these issues in new and wider ways
4. to share perspectives between community members in the different regions.

The overall process consists of four stages (see diagram below). The purpose of the first stage was to understand community perspectives on the causes and effects of the August 2008 war in the four target regions, and the differences between the perspectives held by people in these regions. The results of this stage are captured in the report ‘Community perceptions of the *causes* and *effects* of the August 2008 conflict in Kvemo Kartli, Samegrelo, Samtskhe-Javakheti and Shida Kartli’. The second stage focused on deeper analysis of the challenges for peace, security and stability in each of the target regions, while the third stage focused on the development of strategies to respond to key region-specific challenges. This report is one of four summarising the region-specific results of stages two and three (the other three reports cover the remaining target regions). For the methodology used to analyse the challenges identified, and to develop corresponding ‘solution strategies’, please see the annex at the end of this report. The fourth and final stage is underway at the time of publication and involves representatives from all four regions working together to plan solutions to shared challenges at the national level.

The value of this process is that it promotes a deep and sustained dialogue among a consistent group of interlocutors, both within and between the four target regions. The strategies for peace, security and stability developed in this process for each of the four regions, and for the nation as a whole, will then serve as the basis for dialogue between Georgian civil society and decision-makers at the regional, national and international levels.

STAGES IN THE DISCUSSION PROCESS

National level



Regional level

1. Causes and effects of the August 2008 conflict
2. Analysis of region-specific challenges to peace, security and stability
3. Strategising solutions to key region-specific challenges
4. Strategising solutions to key shared / national challenges

Summary of the strategy

This strategy seeks to address the following key challenges for peace, security and stability in Samegrelo, as identified by communities:

1. Human relationships between Georgians and ethnic Abkhaz have become more difficult to maintain since the August 2008 war.
2. Trade between the populations of Samegrelo and Abkhazia has become more difficult because of the conflict.
3. Feelings of insecurity across the whole of Samegrelo, but especially along the Administrative Boundary Line (ABL).
4. Poor progress in developing local democratic institutions.

To address these challenges the representative group proposes the following:

Rebuild trust-based relations between Georgians and ethnic Abkhaz, through:

- Supporting increased confidence of Abkhazians in Georgians and in Georgia.
- Supporting greater willingness to engage with people across the divide and greater support for ‘public diplomacy initiatives’ – i.e. initiatives that promote engagement and confidence.
- Ensuring that the political and legal environment in Georgia supports public diplomacy.

Facilitate trade between the populations of Samegrelo and Abkhazia, through:

- Creation of special market zones where people from both sides can trade legally, and facilitation of informal trade.
- Development of a more competitive local market in Samegrelo.

Increase security in Samegrelo, and especially along the ABL, through:

- Establishment of an international peacekeeping force with a police mandate and executive power on both sides of the ABL.
- Creation of mechanisms for ensuring justice and dealing with crisis scenarios.
- Normalisation of relations with Russia.

Further develop democratic institutions in the region, through:

- Further decentralisation of governance processes.
- Greater involvement of the local population and civil society in governance processes.
- Improved professionalism of public officials working in local government.

Challenges for peace, security and stability in Samegrelo

Community consultations conducted by the representative group in June 2010 revealed seven region-specific challenges for peace, security and stability. Based on community views and feedbacks, the first four challenges below were identified as the most important, while the remaining three were considered less pressing.

a) Key challenges

1. *Human relationships between Georgians and ethnic Abkhaz have become more difficult to maintain since the August 2008 war.* This negative trend will further reduce confidence between Abkhaz and Georgians, making people on both sides less willing to engage across the divide. As a result, it will be much harder to find solutions to the conflict and more difficult to prevent future critical situations.
2. *Trade between the populations of Samegrelo and Abkhazia has become more difficult because of the conflict.* While this is a long-term issue, trade has further reduced since the August 2008 war. This has had an impact on the economic prosperity of a proportion of the population in Samegrelo (especially internally displaced persons/IDPs). The resultant lower living standards mean that some people are becoming dissatisfied with the Government's approach to managing the conflict – there is a perception that economic relations between Georgia, Abkhazia and Russia could, in the long term, provide an important foundation for conflict resolution.
3. *Feelings of insecurity across the whole of Samegrelo, but especially along the Administrative Boundary Line (ABL).* People feel that the present peace is very fragile and that even a relatively small incident could be used as an excuse or provocation, by either Georgia or Russia, to create a much bigger conflict. This fear is reinforced by the presence of Russian troops in Abkhazia and the absence of an agreed security mechanism that includes the deployment of international peacekeepers in Eastern Abkhazia. In addi-

tion, the fact that the local government in Samegrelo was not properly prepared for managing the impact of the August 2008 war adds to people's insecurities.

4. *Poor progress in developing local democratic institutions.* While the development of local democratic institutions is a challenge across the country, it has become an even more pressing issue in Samegrelo following the August 2008 war. This is because people have begun to question the effectiveness of western democratic values in meeting their needs and aspirations, as well as the degree to which local governance is really 'democratic'.

b) Other challenges

5. *Protection of Georgian culture in Abkhazia.* There is a concern among ethnic Georgians living in Abkhazia that they are being forced to renounce their Georgian culture, and instead describe themselves as 'Megrelians'. This process is referred to as 'Megreliation'. There is also a feeling that the international community could do more to protect the rights of ethnic Georgians in Abkhazia (including for example the right to access Georgian language education).
6. *Perceptions of inefficient and inappropriate use of donor funds.* The majority of community representatives believe that donor funds have been spent inefficiently and were not used to respond to needs. There is no flexible mechanism for controlling the distribution of funds either to the Government or to the civil sector. The criteria used by donors for disbursing funds are based on their experience in different countries, rather than the local context and needs.
7. *Lack of accurate information on regional developments.* The population of Samegrelo has limited access to objective sources of information. This is because magazines and newspapers are expensive, few have access to the internet, and regional television outlets are thought to be politically controlled.

Key challenge 1: Human relationships between Georgians and ethnic Abkhaz have become more difficult to maintain since the August 2008 war

a) Importance for local peace, security and stability

This negative trend will further reduce confidence between Abkhaz and Georgians, making people on both sides less willing to engage across the divide. As a result, it will be much harder to find solutions to the conflict and more difficult to prevent future critical situations.

b) Local impact (who suffers and how do they suffer)

- People's attitudes towards one another have hardened. As a result, both Georgians and Abkhaz are much less willing to engage in peacebuilding initiatives than they were before the August 2008 war.
- There is an attitude of mistrust toward Abkhazia in Samegrelo. This is especially the case among young people who do not have a history of interaction with people across the Administrative Boundary Line (ABL). Similarly, young people in Abkhazia, who have no history of friendship or interactions with Georgians, are less likely to want to meet with Georgians than are their parents' generation.
- The life of mixed families has become much more difficult as it is harder to travel across the ABL and to stay in contact with family members.
- People on both sides of the ABL experience otherwise avoidable incidents of theft or violence from Abkhaz and Russian militaries. Before the August 2008 war, when it was easier to maintain contact and relationships with people in Abkhazia, such incidents were easier to deal with.
- All people in Samegrelo (and indeed the whole country), as well as in Abkhazia, suffer from the lack of public diplomacy initiatives, as without such initiatives there is little likelihood of resolving the conflict and less opportunity to prevent future critical situations.

c) Driving factors (causes and actors)

- Abkhazians are afraid of Georgians as a result of the conflict in the 1990s. Aggressive language toward Abkhaz further reduces their willingness to meet with Georgians.
- Barriers to interaction across the ABL are imposed by the Russian military presence and Abkhaz authorities. There are now only a few points of access between Samegrelo and Abkhazia.
- There is a history of incidents of kidnapping for ransom, carjacking, robbery and even murder by groups across the ABL. In addition, for some people in Samegrelo memories of the August 2008 war are still strong. These experiences result in some holding negative attitudes towards people on the other side of the ABL.
- If a person becomes too involved with Abkhazia (e.g. crosses the border or invites someone from Abkhazia to their home) they may be labelled as a ‘traitor’ or ‘collaborator’ and even ‘spy’ by the Georgian authorities. This seems to happen most frequently to opposition figures.
- While international organisations used to support a broader range of non-governmental organisations (NGOs) to engage in peacebuilding activities (e.g. people-to-people contacts, joint activities and joint problem solving), there is now a tendency to support a very narrow group of NGOs who may not be very effective, because they are too close to either the Georgian Government or the Abkhaz authorities and do not voice the opinions of ordinary people.

d) Recommendations

In order **to rebuild trust-based relations between Georgians and ethnic Abkhaz**, the representative group recommends the following:

1. *Increased confidence of Abkhazians in Georgians and Georgia:*
 - a) The Government uses less offensive language, and is more consistent when describing people in Abkhazia.
 - b) Georgia commits to the non-use of force and is faithful to this commitment.
 - c) The Government removes economic and information barriers to Abkhazia.
 - d) The Government establishes mechanisms to enable Abkhaz to adopt a European orientation.

- e) The Government, civil society and wider society attempt to understand the interests and fears of Abkhazians.
- 2. *Greater willingness to engage with people across the divide and greater support for 'public diplomacy initiatives' – i.e. initiatives that promote engagement and confidence:*
 - a) National NGOs, with the technical and financial support of donors, implement informational programmes about the objectives, methods and impact of public diplomacy initiatives. Young people should be a primary target of such information campaigns.
 - b) International NGOs organise trainings for community members in Samegrelo on the nature of public diplomacy and how to engage in and promote public diplomacy.
 - c) International NGOs, with support from donors, support Georgian civil society to develop strategies and tactics for public diplomacy.
 - d) Local and international NGOs and international experts organise trainings for the media to increase their ability to cover public diplomacy in a sensitive and positive manner.
- 3. *The political and legal environment in Georgia supports public diplomacy:*
 - a) The Government takes measures to implement the 'State Strategy on the Occupied Territories' and its 'Action Plan' in good faith. This means that the resultant measures support engagement across the divide, rather than reducing the likelihood of engagement; and that the measures are agreed jointly with the Abkhaz *de facto* authorities.
 - b) The State Ministry for Reintegration, alongside other relevant public bodies, organises and participates in public discussions about the 'Strategy for Engagement' (with the participation of representatives of local and international NGOs, the media and local community members), and adjusts plans according to the outcomes of the discussions.
 - c) The Georgian Government, with support from international donors, sponsors and stimulates direct co-operation projects across the divide at the community level. Such projects should make use of existing community links that currently connect Georgians and Abkhazians, such as family relationships and trade interests.

Key challenge 2: Trade between the populations of Samegrelo and Abkhazia has become more difficult because of the conflict

a) Importance for local peace, security and stability

While this is a long-term issue, trade has further reduced since the August 2008 war. This has had an impact on the economic prosperity of some segments of the population in Samegrelo. The resultant lower living standards mean that some people are becoming dissatisfied with the Government's approach to managing the conflict – there is a perception that economic relations between Georgia, Abkhazia and Russia could, in the long term, provide an important foundation for conflict resolution.

b) Local impact (who suffers and how do they suffer)

- As a result of reduced trade, the social and economic situation has now worsened for some segments of the population in Samegrelo.
- While there was a considerable amount of illegal / informal trade before the August 2008 war, this is now much less profitable (because of bribes) and has for the most part stopped, badly affecting those dependent on it.
- Because of their reduced ability to earn money in Samegrelo a significant proportion of people from the region have migrated to Russia. The majority of the region's population is now dependent on remittances transferred by relatives living there.

c) Driving factors (causes and actors)

- Samegrelo used to be prosperous, in large part because of economic relations with the Russian Federation, through Abkhazia. These trade and economic relations decreased after the war in 1992 because of distrust between Georgians and Abkhaz, the destruction of infrastructure and economic blockades.
- The Abkhaz authorities and Russian border guards have made crossing the ABL much harder, which in turn has reduced the ability of traders and farmers to move products across the ABL. In particular, following

the August 2008 war, farmers and traders have had to pay very high bribes in order to take their produce and goods across the ABL.

- The Georgian Government also makes trade across the ABL difficult. People who cross the border are subjected to intensive questioning by Georgian police and border guards.

d) Recommendations

In order **to facilitate trade between the populations of Samegrelo and Abkhazia**, the representative group recommends the following:

1. *Creation of special market zones where people from both sides can trade legally, and facilitation of informal trade:*
 - a) NGOs, in close co-operation with the Government and international organisations, start public discussions concerning the legal status of market zones, to get more information about international experience in similar situations.
 - b) With the international community acting as a mediator, the Georgian and *de facto* Abkhaz authorities negotiate to develop a legal base defining the status of the market.
 - c) The Government develops a programme of infrastructure development to realise markets agreed with the *de facto* Abkhaz authorities.
 - d) International donors finance small micro-projects based on the mutual interest of both sides.
 - e) The NGO sector, with support from the media, runs an awareness-raising campaign along the ABL, to raise the local population's interest in cross-ABL trade and explain how it can be done.
2. *Development of a more competitive local market in Samegrelo:*
 - a) The Government, in close co-operation with experts from the NGO sector, develops a programme to re-establish the anti-monopoly service.
 - b) Relevant departments in the Government undertake a review of the tax code, with the aim of simplifying it, both in terms of the different rates and their administration.
 - c) The Government develops a plan of subsidies for the agricultural sector in Samegrelo.

Key challenge 3: Feelings of insecurity across the whole of Samegrelo, but especially along the ABL

a) Importance for local peace, security and stability

People feel that the present peace is very fragile and that even a relatively small incident could be used as an excuse or provocation, by either Georgia or Russia, to create a much bigger conflict. This fear is reinforced by the presence of Russian troops in Abkhazia and the absence of an agreed security mechanism that includes the deployment of international peacekeepers in Eastern Abkhazia. In addition, the fact that the local government in Samegrelo was not properly prepared for managing the impact of the August 2008 war compounds people's insecurities.

b) Local impact (who suffers and how do they suffer)

- The population across Samegrelo does not feel secure and people are afraid of renewed conflict in the future. This fear is fuelled by memories of the August 2008 war, the presence of Russian troops in Abkhazia and the absence of peacekeepers in the region, and is reinforced by a feeling that the local government is not properly prepared for future crisis scenarios.
- This feeling is especially pronounced in communities living along the ABL, who are vulnerable to raids from across the ABL during harvest periods, and feel unprotected by the Georgian police.
- Although such incidents do not happen every day, the fact that they occur adds a significant amount of psychological pressure to people's lives.
- As a result, migration is increasing from communities along the ABL as people leave their homes in search of a safer environment.

c) Driving factors (causes and actors)

- Although Samegrelo was not as badly affected by the August 2008 war as Shida Kartli, the population still experienced bombings and occupation by Russian forces.

- While the United Nations Mission in Georgia (UNOMIG), which previously patrolled on both sides of the ABL, has now been disbanded, no alternative security mechanisms have yet been agreed by Georgia, Russia and Abkhazia in the Geneva Process. Most importantly there are no peacekeeping forces stationed in Eastern Abkhazia.
- Russia has not fully complied with the Sarkozy-Medvedev-Saakashvili ceasefire agreement, as Russian forces have not yet withdrawn to their original positions.
- The European Union Monitoring Mission (EUMM) established to monitor the withdrawal of Russian troops is not able enter Abkhazia, does not have an executive mandate and is unable to patrol in Abkhazia.
- Human rights violations continue to occur along the ABL (albeit infrequently). These include kidnappings, carjackings and robberies.
- When incidents happen along the ABL, there is no cross-ABL mechanism for registering the fact that a crime has been committed and for properly investigating the crime.
- The Georgian police feel unable to go many places along the ABL, as this could be seen as a source of provocation by ‘the other side’. Indeed, there are several examples of police personnel having been shot.
- The August 2008 conflict demonstrated that the local government was not properly prepared for crisis scenarios, and had not developed adequate security or evacuation plans.
- The overall environment is tense because of continued poor diplomatic relations between Russian and Georgia, and the use of aggressive and provocative language by both sides. This tension further reduces the likelihood of agreement on a security mechanism and increases the likelihood of future conflict.

d) Recommendations

In order **to increase security in Samegrelo, and especially along the ABL**, the representative group recommends the following:

1. *Establishment of an international peacekeeping force with a police mandate and executive power on both sides of the ABL:*
 - a) The Georgian Government intensifies efforts to negotiate the agreement of an international peacekeeping force on both sides of the ABL.
 - b) During the negotiation process, the Government works with the Russian forces and Abkhaz *de facto* authorities to ensure the stability and safety of the population along the ABL.
2. *Creation of mechanisms for ensuring justice and dealing with crisis scenarios:*
 - a) The Georgian Government, with the support of the international community, establishes trilateral meetings (Georgia, Abkhazia and Russia) to discuss regional crime issues, for example through the restoration of the 'Chuburkhinji meetings' format.
 - b) Local government agencies develop security and evacuation plans in anticipation of any future crises, and communicate these plans throughout the region.
3. *Normalisation of relations with Russia:*
 - a) Official government statements and diplomatic proposals relating to improving relations with Russia are honoured through the Government's actions at all levels.
 - b) Georgian governmental officials use more constructive language when talking to and about Russia.

Key challenge 4: Poor progress in developing local democratic institutions

a) Importance for local peace, security and stability

While the development of local democratic institutions is a challenge across the country, it has become an even more pressing issue in Samegrelo following the August 2008 war. This is because people have begun to question the effectiveness of western democratic values in meeting their needs and aspirations, as well as the degree to which local governance is really ‘democratic’.

b) Local impact (who suffers and how do they suffer)

- The population feels that local and central government are not interested in their views on a range of issues important for their daily lives and welfare.
- People do not feel that they are part of the governance process. In particular, they do not feel that they are able influence the implementation of government policy and actions.
- There is a perception that because of the lack of consultation with local communities, government resources (which are already scarce) are spent on projects that do not benefit the local population and do not address real needs.
- People in the region feel frustrated by the unresponsiveness of the Government to their needs and this is fuelling apathy about the political process.
- People are questioning the effectiveness of democratic values in meeting their needs and aspirations.

c) Driving factors (causes and actors)

- Local budgets mainly depend on transfers from the centre and, as a result, central authorities determine priorities for the region. Although the local authority submits its plan in the process of budget formation, the final decision is made by the centre.

- Local government representatives are selected on the basis of party loyalty and not necessarily on the basis of their capacity to represent a particular constituency. This means that often local government officials are not strongly connected to the citizens they represent and are not encouraged to ‘speak up’ or challenge decisions made or priorities set by more senior officials.
- While legislation provides for the involvement of local civil society in setting regional priorities and budgeting decisions, local authorities appear to lack the political will to establish viable processes for this to happen.
- Local civil society is not very active in the region and is not sufficiently organised to support the population to be more involved in governance processes.
- Few organisations understand their role in shaping public policy and have very little experience in doing so in a constructive manner.
- Even though there are some good media outlets and journalists in Samegrelo, they do not focus their reporting on holding local government processes to account.
- The August 2008 war and its aftermath highlighted a range of flaws in the local democratic process, and the inability of local government to cater for people’s needs.

d) Recommendations

In order **further develop democratic institutions in the region**, the representative group recommends the following:

1. *Further decentralise governance processes:*
 - a) With oversight from the Council of Europe, the Georgian Government and civil society conduct a joint review of the existing legal framework establishing the responsibilities of local and central government, so that it is in line with the ‘European Charter on Local Governance’.
 - b) The Government increases the portion of tax generated in the region that stays under the management of local authorities.

- c) The Government reforms the institution of Governor by transforming the post into an elected office.
- 2. *Greater involvement of the local population and civil society in governance processes:*
 - a) Civil society, with support from international donors, conducts a campaign to raise awareness of local governance processes.
 - b) NGOs create a training programme for citizens in how to engage with the local government in a constructive manner and how to monitor local government spending and activities.
 - c) Local government and NGOs agree on appropriate mechanisms for a public review of budgeting processes.
- 3. *Improved professionalism of public officials working in local government:*
 - a) NGOs and local government, with the support of international donors, develop training for members of the local administration, with a focus on: i) crisis management; ii) strategic planning and budgeting; iii) how to communicate and consult with local communities.
 - b) Local government establishes transparent processes for appointing local officials.

Annex: methodology for analysing problems and strategising solutions

For each identified key challenge the representative group worked through a process of first developing a more elaborated ‘problem statement’ to explain the challenge. On the basis of each problem statement, the group then developed a ‘solution strategy’ for how to resolve the challenge, which in turn provided the material for specific recommendations. At each stage in this process, the representative group consulted with a range of communities in their region, as well as with representatives from other regions.

Developing a ‘problem statement’

In order to develop a problem statement for a specific challenge, the representative group was facilitated to analyse (1) the driving factors behind the problem – that is *what* causes the problem and *who* is responsible, and (2) the impact of the problem – that is *who* suffers and *how* they suffer. Drawing on the identified impacts, the group was then asked to clearly articulate (3) why the issue is important for peace, security and stability in their region.

Turning a ‘problem statement’ into a ‘solution strategy’

Once the problem statement had been developed, the group was then asked to develop a corresponding ‘solution strategy’. To do this, they were first asked to identify (1) the overall change that they would like to see in relation to the challenge. They were then asked to identify the key things that need to happen in society to achieve this overall change. That is, to identify (2) the preconditions that need to be met, whether changes to policies, practices, attitudes or behaviours. The most difficult aspect of this part of the process was to make sure that the list did not become a long ‘shopping list’. As such, the group was encouraged to capture only those elements that are absolutely necessary, and without which the overall change could not happen. Finally, the group was asked to brainstorm (3) the steps or changes that are necessary in order to bring about each of these pre-conditions. Please see below for an example ‘solution strategy’ given to the group to assist their thinking.

Example solution strategy – for illustrative purposes only

1) Overall change wanted			
To create an enabling environment where marginalised women from conflict-affected communities can protect their rights and take an active part in decision-making			
2) Key preconditions that need to be met in order to achieve the overall change			
Women have increased confidence and desire to take part in political life	Women have increased and relevant skills to take part in political life	There are adequate laws to protect women's rights	There is public support for the inclusion of women in decision-making, public life, and for the protection of women's rights
3) Necessary steps to bring about the key preconditions			
↑ Women's successes receive as much recognition as those of men	↑ Women's access to development opportunities increases	↑ There is clear and widespread understanding of what women's rights are	↑ There are changes in the perception of the role of women in society
Women have a strong support network	There is an environment in which women can play multiple roles	Civil society is organized and is pushing for greater protection of women's rights	
Women feel an active demand for their input	Women are aware of appropriate career paths for political life	There are champions of women's rights in the political system	
Women see the results of their activities	Culture of politics and public life allows for skills to develop	There is a base of information on the social benefits of women's participation	
Political culture becomes less macho.			

Developing recommendations from the ‘solution strategy’

The group was then asked to draw recommendations from the solution strategy by (1) reformulating each precondition as a key issue that needs to be resolved, and (2) reformulating each step as a precise recommendation of *what* needs to be done and *who* is responsible for the change. Please see below for example recommendations provided to the group to assist their thinking.

Example recommendations – for illustrative purposes only

1) Key issue to be resolved	
Enhance the confidence and desire of women to take part in political life	
3) Specific recommendations	
	↑
That the Georgian media increase their coverage of women's involvement in community and public life, highlighting the contributions that women are making to Georgian society.	
That national and international NGOs support women to play an active role in politics, by providing relevant training, encouragement and mobilizing women around opportunities for advocacy;	
That all political parties, international organizations and NGOs actively seek the input of women when they are formulating new policies	
That all political parties actively recruit women as members and examine their working culture and practices to ensure that they are gender sensitive.	

This report is based on the consultations, analysis and strategising conducted by the following group members in Samegrelo, and has been validated by them:

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The Caucasus Institute for Peace, Democracy and Development (CIPDD)

The Caucasus Institute for Peace, Democracy and Development (CIPDD) is a public policy think-tank specialising in the broad area of democracy development. CIPDD was founded in 1992 in Tbilisi, Georgia. It is a non-governmental and not-for-profit organisation. It advocates policy goals such as the development of a vibrant and diverse civil society, effective and accountable public institutions based on the rule of law and an integrated political community, one which at the same time respects and preserves the identities of different ethnic and religious communities. CIPDD's main activities include public policy research and publishing and disseminating its results, and organising different forms of debate – professional, political or public – about this work.



The Georgian Young Lawyers' Association (GYLA)

The Georgian Young Lawyers' Association (GYLA) is a non-governmental organization dedicated to promoting human rights and the rule of law. We adhere to the Constitution of Georgia, legislation and our Statute on the whole territory of Georgia. GYLA is a membership-based organisation.

Goals of GYLA:

- Promote the rule of law;
- Protect human rights and freedoms;
- Increase public legal awareness;
- Promote norms of professional ethics among lawyers;
- Develop the skills and competence of lawyers;
- Develop the legislative basis for civil society and the rule of law in the country.



Saferworld

Saferworld works to prevent and reduce violent conflict and promote co-operative approaches to security. We work with governments, international organisations and civil society to encourage and support effective policies and practises through advocacy, research and policy development and through supporting the actions of others.

Peace, security and stability in Samegrelo – a community-informed strategy

According to local communities, the following challenges have to be met to ensure peace, security and stability in the region:

Rebuild trust-based relations between ethnic Georgians and Abkhaz. Human relationships between ethnic Georgians and Abkhaz have become more difficult to maintain since the August 2008 war. This negative trend will further reduce confidence and makes it much harder to find solutions to the conflict.

Facilitate trade between the populations of Samegrelo and Abkhazia. While this is a long-term issue, trade has further reduced since the August 2008 war. This has had an impact on the economic prosperity of some segments of the population in Samegrelo. Economic relations between Georgia, Abkhazia and Russia could, in the long term, provide an important foundation for conflict resolution.

Increase security in Samegrelo, and especially along the Administrative Boundary Line (ABL). The population in Samegrelo, and especially along the ABL, does not feel secure and is afraid of renewed conflict in the future. This fear is fuelled by memories of the August 2008 war, the presence of Russian troops in Abkhazia and the absence of peacekeepers in the region.

Further develop democratic institutions in the region. Following the August 2008 war people have begun to question the effectiveness of western democratic values in meeting their needs and aspirations, as well as the degree to which local governance is really 'democratic'.

Detailed recommendations for how to address each challenge are included in this report.

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